

HUGO Founding Meeting - Montreux, Switzerland

September 6 and 7 1988

We met for our first session 8:00PM on the evening of September 6. The purpose, functions and to some extent, mechanisms of HUGO were discussed. The officers, council and membership structure was discussed with considerable discussion of how exclusive it should be. There was a final vote to go with the academy model rather than the association or society model.

The second session was on the morning of Wednesday, September 7, interrupted by a morning coffee break. Committees were set up to work from 2-4PM. These committees were the committee on the HGM workshops, chaired by Ruddle; a committee on the statement, chaired by Cantor; the committee on data bases, chaired by Philipson; and, the financial committee, chaired by Gilbert. Furthermore, there was a nominating committee, chaired by Matsubara with Ron Worton as a leading member.

It was decided that there should be a president who would serve for 3 years; there should be a vice-president, one from each region who would likewise serve 3 years, presumably one new vice-president being selected each year; and, a president-elect who would be elected one year before retirement of the incumbent. In addition, there would be a secretary and a treasurer, the latter also being chairman of the finance committee. There should be an executive committee, which is made up of the officers, plus 5 others. It was in the last analysis determined that the council would consist of 42 persons and that the membership would consist of 250 persons.

The council as a whole reconvened at about 4:45PM on September 7 to hear the reports of the several committees. The draft of the statement prepared by the committee, as a revision of the earlier statements was still considered inadequate

and I appointed yet another group to rework it and report in the evening. The report of the data base committee was rather comprehensive, based on the extensive experience of Philipson. The report of the finance committee concerned itself mainly with the amount of monies that would be necessary for the operation.

The first exercise when the session opened on Tuesday evening -- after I had given an overview of purpose, functions and mechanisms -- was a clockwise progression around the table for a statement by each participant, i.e., an introduction and a description of their area of work and interest.

The budget proposed (as presented by John Tooze) broke down as follows: Fellowships, 1.5 million a year; Meetings and instructional courses rising to 500,000 by the third year; Human gene mapping workshop 1 million the first year; 2 million by the third year; council committees and secretariat 750,000, to a total of 3.5 million the first year and 4.75 million the third year. A genomics center would require construction funds of about 30 million dollars, an annual operating budget of about 30 million dollars and data base would cost about 3 million a year. A report was submitted by the Human Gene Mapping workshop group.

The nominating committee nominated McKusick, Bodmer and Dausset for President. The election were held by secret ballot at the beginning of the evening session (the final session on the 7th of September). (Service was very slow at dinner that evening because of a large Scottish group that was at the hotel also, so the session did not begin until almost 9:00.) There were a succession of three ballots. **McKusick** was elected president on the first ballot, and Bodmer and Dausset were carried over for consideration for vice-president, which was the second ballot. The Vice-president nominees included the two president nominees who did not get elected and Mirzabekov, Honjo, Pearson, Matsubara and Gilbert. Bodmer, Dausset and Matsubara were elected vice-presidents. The third election was for the

five members of the council. In order to achieve, not only proper distribution geographically, but also proper distribution by disciplines, five areas of special interest were designated, namely, data banks, physical mapping/sequencing, other species, ethics and human disease, and genetic mapping, including HGM interests. The nominees were Philipson from data banks, Cantor, Hood and Southern from physical mapping/sequencing, Lyon, Jenkins and Kafatos from other species; Ferguson-Smith and Caskey from ethics and human disease; and, Robson, Ruddle and Shows from HGM. In addition, Mirzabekov and Gilbert, who had lost out in the vice-presidential election, were also included in the lineup. The instructions were that people should vote for individuals, not with special consideration to discipline. (I am not certain what happened to Honjo in that round; I believe he did not get elected as a vice-president.) The vote came out with Philipson, Cantor, Hood, Ferguson-Smith and Ruddle as the five council members elected. Tooze was elected secretary and Gilbert was elected treasurer and chairman of the finance committee. Of the other standing committees, one on international program coordination, Honjo, Brenner and Cantor were elected. Philipson was elected chairman of the standing committee on data bases, which would also include technology. In other words, it would be a standing committee on data bases and technology. We also will have a standing committee on ethics and social issues. No chairman was identified for this committee at this time.

The standing committee on finance consists of Gilbert (chairman), Bodmer, Matsubara, Pearson, Collins, Frezel, Tocchini-Valentini, Worton and Sutherland.

Near the end of the meeting there was a show of hands of how many members of the council would be present at the meeting in Valencia. Because this is a considerable number, we will have a meeting of the executive committee and council at that time.

The last part of the meeting was devoted to a discussion of election of members. It was decided that the council would consist of the 41 members on the list that was made up before the conference, plus John Collins, who attended the meeting as an observer and was elevated to full council status. It was decided that the council would not turn over for the first two years; that thereafter 14 new members would be elected each year. It would be, presumably, determined by lot which of the members of the council would be one-year incumbents, which two year incumbents, and which three year incumbents.

After the initiation of the new system, it was strongly expressed by Jim Watson, in particular, that re-election for another term should not be permitted immediately, but presumably he was in agreement with having the council member re-elected after a one-year interval.

We brought to the Montreux meeting, a list of 120 proposed founding members (additional to the members of the council). Added to that, during the final stages of the meeting, were a total of about 120 additional. It was the final vote of the council that the members of the council, at some time before October 1, should send to my office names of nominees, together with a succinct statement of their area of work and expertise and accomplishment. During October, the council will pick from the nominated individuals a membership not to exceed 250, including the 42 members of the council. The executive committee would be urged to review both the original list, which probably will stand as elected, and the new nominees with attention to uniformity of criteria.

It seemed a general feeling that incorporation should take place in Switzerland under Article 60 of the Swiss Civil Code, this being the mechanism by which EMBO was incorporated.

It should be noted that 32 of the 42 council members attended the meeting;

that the council has 5 Nobel Laureates of whom all were present (these are Dausset, Dulbecco, Gilbert, Jacob and Watson); that there were two observers, Peter Goodfellow, who was standing in for Sir Walter Bodmer, and Dr. Karpov, who was accompanying Dr. Mirzabekov from Moscow; that all three Japanese members were present, namely, Honjo, Matsubara and Shimizu; that the final break-down on the council, according to nation of origin is as follows: US - 12, UK - 7, Germany - 5, France - 4, Japan - 3, Canada, Holland, and Sweden - 2 each, and Australia, Greece, Italy, Switzerland, and USSR - 1 each, to a total of 42. At the meeting in Montreux, only two of these countries, Sweden and Greece, were not represented.

The human genome was not the only complex genome represented in the work of the council members present; some work on mice, drosophila, or bacteria.

This historic meeting was, in the comment of Peter Goodfellow, as significant potentially as the Asilomar meeting which considered rules for regulating recombinant DNA research. Potentially this founding meeting of HUGO is more significant in a positive way.

The hotel where the meeting was held, the Hotel Bonivard, is named for Francois Bonivard, the Swiss cleric and patriot, "The prisoner of Chillon". The hotel is located within sight and easy walking distance of the Chateau Chillon (Castle Chillon), which was made famous by Lord Byron's poem. Many other artists, writers, and musicians have found Montreux a congenial place to live. The most famous was Jean Jacque Rousseau but they include also, in addition to Lord Byron, Shelley, Tolstoy, Mendelssohn, Tchaikovsky, Stravinsky, and, particularly interestingly, Victor Hugo. (who of course traveled widely in Europe).

In addition to the attendees mentioned earlier, 2 staff people Diane Hinton and Joanna Strayer, were present. The expenses of the meeting was borne by the Howard Hughes Medical Institute as part of its human genome program.